

THE JEWISH HERALD

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BARONESS DE HIRSCH.

Paper Read Before Jewish Literary Society at Houston, Sunday, Nov. 22, by Miss Bettie Mendelsohn.

Clara de Hirsch, wife of Baron Maurice de Hirsch, was born at Antwerp June 13, 1833, and died in Paris April 1, 1899.

The baroness received a liberal education. She was an accomplished linguist, able to speak and write fluently in French, German, English and Italian. After leaving the schoolroom she acted as her father's secretary, and in this way became conversant not only with his business affairs, but also with his work as legislator and philanthropist. This proved to be a valuable experience during her husband's lifetime and particularly so after his death, when she was left sole administrator of his large estate. She was a ready writer and was her husband's only assistant while he was abroad, and at home, when his secretaries were overburdened, she often relieved them of long and difficult tasks.

In 1855 she was married to Baron de Hirsch and lived in Brussels, Munich, and finally in Paris.

Two children were born to them, a girl and a boy. The daughter died in infancy, and the son, Lucien, a gifted and promising young man of thirty, died in 1887.

The baron, in reply to a message of sympathy, said: "My son I have lost, but not my heir; humanity is my heir." From this blow the baroness never recovered, nor did she ever lay aside her apparel of mourning. Shortly after his son's death, the baron went to Constantinople. The baroness accompanied him, and while there she spent most of her time in the poor districts of the city, and after careful investigation, distributed more than \$125,000 among needy families without distinction of creed. Uninfluenced, Baron de Hirsch might have devoted his fortune

to totally different purposes, but in philanthropic matters he yielded to his wife's judgment. It was she who gently guided his interests toward philanthropy. She would not permit money of which the poor, persecuted and oppressed Jews stood in so much need, to be turned aside into foreign channels. She determined that her husband should turn his energies to relieving the distress of his coreligionists.

In the work of founding colonies in Argentina and Canada, as an outlet for the persecuted Jews in Russia and the Orient, she was her husband's associate and inspiration. She was thoroughly conversant with all his schemes, so that at his death she was able to continue, develop and complete, as well as add to, the undertakings begun by him.

The baron was a remarkable man, gifted with extraordinary powers, with a genius for large affairs, which was displayed even in a higher degree in his gigantic plans for the exodus of the Russian Jews than in the amassing of his great fortune. He loved pleasure, but disliked vanity. He was not endowed with sentiment, nor was he religious in the ordinary sense. His ideals were all merged in his devotion to his far-reaching and carefully planned scheme of benevolence. No appeals made to him—and there were many—to endow some great institution in France, or to erect some artistic public building to perpetuate his name and family, ever induced him to turn aside from his plans for effecting the emigration of the Russian Jews and converting them into agricultu-

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